

PRESS CONFERENCE

RDML PATRICK DRISCOLL, Spokesman, Multi-National Force-Iraq, and

REAR ADMIRAL MOHAMMED JAWAD, Head of the Iraqi Navy

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PARTICIPANTS:

RDML PATRICK DRISCOLL AND RADM MOHAMMED JAWAD

REPORTERS:

REP 1-12

REP1 = REPORTER 1

INT = INTERPRETER

RDML DRISCOLL:

As Salamu 'Alaykum and good afternoon. It's a great honor today to be joined by Rear Admiral Jawad, head of the Iraqi Navy. It is fitting that the Admiral is here today with us to discuss recent progress in Iraqi Naval Forces as we approach the celebration of Iraqi Navy Day on 12 August. All branches of the Iraqi Security Forces have made significant strides over the past year in developing capability, but I am particularly proud to be here today to listen to Admiral Jawad highlight the progress that the Iraqi Navy has made in recent months.

The Iraqi Navy and Coalition Naval Forces partner in critically important maritime missions that include maintaining security and stability in the Iraqi territorial waters, monitoring maritime traffic, protecting commercial shipping into and out of Iraqi ports, and protecting Iraq's coastline and infrastructure from any potential threats.

An important element of our joint Iraqi and Coalition maritime security operations is in the protection of Iraq's major oil terminals, which I know the Admiral is going to talk about. Iraq is blessed with abundant oil resources. Iraq's two main offshore oil terminals are located in Iraqi territorial waters out at sea about 19 miles south of the al Faw Peninsula. These offshore terminals are the primary node for exporting Iraqi oil that brings in over 90 percent of Iraq's national revenue. These oil revenues are essential to the Prime Minister's

revitalization, reconstruction, and economic development programs. It is a mission that Admiral Jawad and his sailors and marines take very seriously and are executing with great professionalism.

The Iraqi Navy is a proud member of Coalition Task Force-158, whose mission it is to ensure maritime security in the northern Gulf area. Eight navies have participated in these maritime operations with the primary focus on protecting oil terminals. Over the last several years, the Iraqi Navy, under the Admiral's leadership, has assumed more and more responsibility in these maritime operations.

I first met Admiral Jawad in 2006 when we were both Navy captains, and I was struck with his resolve to rebuild the Navy that the previous regime had let fall into disrepair. Now that we meet again, I've observed Admiral Jawad's great ability to lead and his professionalism in building the capability of the Iraqi Navy that is now protecting Iraqi's vital interests. Thanks to Admiral Jawad and the bravery and dedication of the sailors and marines, the Iraqi Navy is a branch of the military that all Iraqis can be proud of.

With that, I'll turn it over to Admiral Jawad to discuss his Navy, and then we'll take your questions. Sir.

RADM JAWAD:

Thank you very much, Admiral. (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT:

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to praise our athletes, Iraqi athletes in Beijing Olympics; hopefully they would achieve big achievements there.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attendance today. We're going to give you briefing about the Iraqi Navy, its actual size, its actual operations, its future plans and the successes that it has achieved. This achievement goes with the Memorial No. 71 for the establishing of the Iraqi Navy, which is the 12th of August. The current size of the Iraqi Navy is relatively small. It is consisting of 1,900 personnel. It is expected to reach 3,000 within the end of the year 2010. The Navy capabilities are limited, but the level and the high training that the Navy elements have acquired from office... from the officers and high-ranking officials enabled them to undertake lots of the responsibility in the operational sector. The marines now are undertaking the focused defense and all the terminals, KAAOT. It is also carrying out independent duties to searching ships. Also daily and ... during the day and during the night patrols in the territorial water of Iraq; also rescuing in the north Arab Gulf area, also defending the oil terminal, al [unintelligible] side-by-side with the Coalition Navy, also securing the sailing in the naval canals in the territorial water, the Iraqi's territorial water, and Khor Abdullah Canal, for the ships, the commercial ships that are coming and leaving the

Iraqi terminals. The Navy are receiving training in order to receive total responsibility, hopefully, during the coming year, to take the responsibility of protecting oil terminal [unintelligible], also the total sec- ... responsibility for the operations section.

This would lead us to talk about the role of the Navy and building the capacity, the defense capacity, about... and the infrastructure for the oil institutions, which is a strategic role of the Iraqi Armed Forces. Considering where it's being exported of oil, through the oil platforms, nearly 90 percent of the local products is being produced, which forms the fortune and the resource for building the new Iraq.

To accomplish the mission of the Iraqi Navy, the government has approved to buy number of Navy equipments, new Navy equipments, to secure the accomplishments of the mission precisely. It is true that we have contracted to build four patrol ships, big patrol ships with Italy side and two backup ships and three patrol boats with the Canadian/Malaysian partnership company. The Iraqi marine ... the Iraqi Navy is supposed to receive these pieces by the second quarter of the coming year. The Ministry of Defense has contracted with other ... for other parts of the Navy. Hopefully in October, the Iraqi Navy is going to receive 26 combat boats. By the year 2010, we're going to have 47 Navy pieces. Still, we have a lot to accomplish, and the administrative infrastructure, the docks, the accommodation for the fighters, also maintenance workshops, storages, warehouses, all these

are going to be ready when the equipments, the needed equipments will be received.

The first stage of building the Iraqi Navy is based on fighting terrorism and the illegitimate operations in the sea; the second phase is going to be concerning the foreign threats for the ... us, naval security.

We have talked about the marines and their role on the sea, but we did not talk about their role on the coast. As you know, the Iraqi Navy is ... was a part of the forces that have participated in Charge of the Knights operation in Basrah. The marines have taken the honor of protecting the commercial terminals in al Qasr, Khor al-Zubair, also protecting the electric power stations, and have accomplished the mission successfully. All the armed elements and militias have been eliminated. This would lead to the encourage (sic) the foreign investment and that would gives chances and opportunities for the labor for the Iraqi citizen, and that eventually would raise the economy level. The revenues of Mina ... of Umm Qasr Terminal for February until June have doubled, and July ... have doubled in July only, and what happened in the commercial terminals escalated the trust and confidence for the naval dealing with Iraq.

I would like to talk about the relation of the neighbors. I'll start with Kuwait. We have conducted joint operation with the naval... Kuwaiti Navy in Khor Abdullah and the area south of the Gulf, Arab Gulf.

The Iraqi Navy and the Kuwaiti also have ensured the protection for the mines detectors, the British mines detectors, and carried out a cleansing operation for the naval channel ... canals. And that have affected positively the financial revenues for the commercial terminals, the Iraqi commercial terminals. Qatar Diving School have offered, have opened training courses for the Iraqi divers. Twenty-seven divers have joined these training courses, and that's raise their ability to back up the Iraqi Navy.

We have accomplished a lot with the Coalition Navy. We have 17, more than 17 officers with small ranks in Britain. They are taking different courses in leadership, war, navigation, and all other specialties in order to prepare them to work on the new ships. Probably, I would say, during the last year, one of our young officers, Navy officers, he was the best foreign officer in the Naval College, the ... of the British Kingdom in Dartmouth, and he's going to be offered a gift on the 12th of August, which is the Iraqi Navy day. The gifts would be presented by the British Ambassador in Baghdad as a gift from Her Majesty, the Queen of Britain.

Our officers are taking courses in America, Australia, Italy, and different courses. Some of the courses are short; some of the courses are long. Some have finished the training courses, and the others are still engaged and working with their colleagues in the sea. We have small Navy now, but it is going to grow during the coming two years.

We have accomplished a lot. We have lots of challenges to overcome, yet we know it is difficult for any work to be accomplished the way it is planned exactly. But I'm... I'm... I do trust we're going to reach our goal in handling the total security responsibility from the Coalition Forces, and we're going to protect the Iraqi oil exports and we're going to reach the level we aspire. Thank you very much.

RDML DRISCOLL: Questions, please?

REP1: Gina Chon, Wall Street Journal. Admiral Jawad, I have a few questions. One, can you give us a sense of the size of the Navy from 2003, in terms of number of ships and vessels and personnel, to what it is now and what you hope it will be in terms of your needs for the future. And then also, with the oil smuggling and this focus in the Basrah area, have you ... has the Navy made any arrests? If you could give any figures, on, you know, numbers of ships you've stopped or searched, something to give us an idea of sort of the progress that's been made on that. And also, if things have gotten better since the manager of the Umm Qasr port was changed and some of these recent personnel changes, if that also helped in your efforts. Thank you.

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Everybody knows that we have received the Navy in 2003 as it was, zero. We had no equipment; we didn't have a naval base. The work was very hard; the start was very hard. We depended on the first level

on the old staff, naval staff, because they had experience. Many of them have the courage, the will, to build a new Navy base.

Now we're working with a small number of the ships and boats and marine equipment. This number is enough, for the time being, to cover part of our responsibility, to cover it totally. We may face few obstacles in the naval work, but now we do not have trafficking operations specially; we have controlled now Basrah port. I would like to assure the safety of the canals and the territorial water. Insha'Allah, in God's will, with the ... when we receive the equipments, we're going to reach the level in which we're going to work by ourselves without depending on other helps. Thank you.

REP2: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Are you entitled to cover all the areas of Iraq? Are your operations ...
Where have you been before the Charge of the Knights operation?

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: To start, I would like to assure that the territorial water is Iraqi territorial water. Our elements are able to sail anywhere, anyplace in it. The nature of the naval work is joint, of joint nature. In the new world, no Navy is allowed to work individually. We have to work jointly with the others in order to achieve success. The naval elements now are suitable to the use of the officials. The Iraqi Navy, it is part of the Iraqi Armed Forces. We have a plan to receive the total

security responsibility on stages. Our naval plan ... I mean, the plan for receiving the security responsibility is fitting to our equipments now. The Iraqi Navy now have the honor to cover part of the responsibility—not all of it—in order to work and meet the plan for receiving responsibility. The naval equipments, they are not built overnight. It needs time. We need time to train the staff to cover the territorial water. We need naval equipment; we need the staff; we need tools in order to reach ... to lead and control.

And as much for your second question, where have we been before the Charge of the Knights? Before that, we were a part of the Iraqi Armed Forces and we are still. But according to receiving responsibility, Khor Abdullah was under our responsibility. And al Basrah [unintelligible], they were under our responsibility. From ... our responsibility starts from the north of Mina Umm Qasr to the Buoy 11. We ... south of this Buoy 11, we cover most of the operation area. We are present from the past, and we hope you would reach the day in which we are going to cover all of the areas. Thank you.

REP3: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Before the Charge of the Knights, what did you need? What did the Navy forces lack? Did you lack boats or other equipments or control over Qasr port? Thank you.

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT:

My lady, the naval work, in order to accomplish it, you need marine equipment, you need the staff, you need tools. You need a system to collect all these under one controlship (sic). We cannot buy marine equipment without preparing the staff to work on it. It is not possible to provide ourselves with high-tech equipments, and the pieces in which we're going to install these equipments are not available. We need to work in steps. We need to organize ourselves according to scientific steps in order to make our building strong. Our plan to build the Navy, since it's a new establishment, since it's new ... are rebuilding, depending on training and planning, planning for future, planning for operations, planning for the training, planning for recruitment, planning for operations, as I said.

We have focused on training the elements who are going to work on these equipments. We weren't lacking something specific, but we were fighting time in order to match with our timetable.

REP4:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT:

Admiral Jawad, you've mentioned the relation between Iraqi Navy and Kuwait and Qatar, but you did not mention the problems we are having from time to time with the neighbor, Iran.

My second question is to Admiral Driscoll: What about the project of Daughters of Iraq? Is it ... Is the American forces backing up this project as Sons of Iraq?

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: For any two neighboring countries on a naval basis, on a navally (sic), we see ... you see problems, not just before ... between Iraq and Iran. As you see a few ... go through history, but now we do not have that ... that ... that much of problems with Iran. We have a mutual sense to build peaceful relation and joint cooperation relations to protect the joint water and to protect the area outside the territorial water ... waters. The territorial water is joint field. A person would like to the territorial water it is joint with the Kuwaiti, with the Iranian, with the ... with the Iraqi, but we need to work on the problems and work on joint cooperation. And by that time, we don't face any problems. Yes, sir.

RDML DRISCOLL: In terms of the Daughters of Iraq, as you've seen, Iraqi Security Forces are beginning to hire volunteers who are female that want to participate, and obviously, what they'll do is provide security at checkpoints and other areas to check females in areas where there's ... for instance, pilgrimages or large numbers of people, and that's an ongoing program that the Iraqi Security Forces are developing now. Sir.

REP5: As Salamu 'Alaykum. (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: I have two questions: First question concerning your current building for the naval capabilities; the second is about the contracts with Italy

and Canadian/Malaysian joint company. There have been some old contracts from the previous regime with Italy and with Egypt; the naval crew was with the ships until the collapse. What is ... Well, what is the destiny of these equipments? And what about the old contracts? Have you canceled them, started new ones?

The second question is about the relation with the neighboring countries. Do you face ... We face problems with the fishing boats, the civil fishing boats with the neighboring Kuwaiti ... Kuwait. We ... They have detained and captured our fishermen for a long time. What about the agreement with ... of the Year 75 with Iran? Have you added new articles or items to it, or what did you do? Thank you very much.

RADM JAWAD:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT:

As for the naval contracts, all of you know that we have a big naval contract with Italy to provide 12 pieces. We have faced problems during the previous regime through delivering these equipments. Two of these equipments are in Italy now, two others in Egypt. We have formed committees with the decree of the Prime Minister to solve these problems and to see if it is possible to rehabilitate these ships. We have high-level delegations to negotiate with the Italian and Egyptian sides. And this is premature to determine or decide about the results. It is not complete yet.

About the fishing problems, you have some kind, political trend in your question. We have agreements with the two neighbors. We have joint areas to ... for the fishermen. We cannot hinder the fishermen from going there. You cannot stop a fisherman to trespass, but once we capture them, we would deliver them, although, respects; some incidents have been targeted, but we dealt with it with all respect. Thank you.

REP6: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Admiral Jawad, what is the nature of the development you're working? To what level the Iraqi Navy is going to develop? Do you have defense strategy in the future?

Admiral Driscoll, the nature ... The nature of your participation in Basrah operation, of Admiral Driscoll, in your ... When do you think the Iraqi Navy is going to be ready to receive the whole security file?

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Concerning my question. The Iraqi Navy is seeking to reach the level in which it would be able to control the security. The amount of what we have of Navy pieces, it depends on our capability to cover the territorial water. The number should be enough, and we do not have bigger numbers. But in order not to be a burden for us, we ... we are part of the Iraqi Armed Forces; we serve the policy of the government. Yet, surely, we receive all the orders from the military commander,

and the nature of the new Navy is not to form a threat to the neighbors, as much as we would like to protect our people.

The end of building the naval system is ... would be to ensure the security of our country. We were part of Charge of the Knights. We have cut the support and funding lines for the armed groups. We supported the ground forces. Our main task was to protect the commercial terminals at Um Qasr area and the power station there. We have succeeded; we made big success in this task. And the results of these successes are touchable through the increase in the revenues of the ports. After the Charge of the Knights, you would see how much we have served al Basrah.

RDML DRISCOLL:

Back in the 2003, after the fall of the former regime, the Iraqi Navy was starting with basically nothing. A short time later, I met Admiral Jawad when he was just beginning to build the Iraqi Navy, and he had no ships, he had very few sailors, and a very limited budget. And with the improvement he's done, here, to have a Navy at sea out there by the oil platforms in the ports, marines providing security, is an amazing effort. In order to have a full up round Navy, it takes quite a bit of time and effort. U.S. Navy, for us it takes about ten years to grow a chief petty officer, which is a senior non-commissioned officer. That chief petty officer, they run the Navy. They have expertise in technical areas; they are expert leaders at managing

sailors, and you just don't create that kind of capability in a short period of time.

So, your question of when are we going to turn over the entire file to the Iraqi Navy? It's going to be conditions-based, and I'm very encouraged by the rapid increase in capability and capacity that the Iraqi Navy has demonstrated under Admiral Jawad's leadership.

But it's one thing to remember that navies work together, and in the Persian Gulf and in the oceans of the world, there's always cooperation between navies, even if the countries at the top don't always agree, when you're out at sea, the navies usually get along pretty well, because they realize that they're out in a hazardous environment, and usually cooperation is pretty good. But I would say that the timing for the security file will be conditions-based. Sir.

REP7: As-Salamu 'Alaykum. (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: My question is for Admiral Jawad. After the successes that have been achieved by Charge of the Knights in Basrah, what ... The leaders in Basrah say some of the outlaws run through the water through Iran.

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: When you see the geography, naval geography, our operation area, you'd see there is a difference between Shatt al-Arab and Khor Abdullah. Khor Abdullah is to the west; Shatt al-Arab is to the east.

So, Shatt al-Arab is within the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior, but I don't think there is someone who uses Shatt al-Arab to penetrate to Iran.

REP8: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Admiral Driscoll, you've said the Iraqi Navy started after 2003 from zero ground. Does it mean the Iraqi Navy, the previous Iraqi Navy eliminated totally and was not existing by that time?

RDML DRISCOLL: Well, I'll defer to Admiral Jawad to discuss how ... what he started with, but there were not many vessels that were operational when he began.

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: When I said "zero ground," I referred to equipment and bases. We didn't have equipment. We, the leadership now is at Um Qasr. We built a new base, but are depending on the staff. The staff is from ... The people who used to serve during the old regime, they have built the new Navy. The sailor, the Navy sailor, it is not easy to make one. We have to depend on the old staff because they have the experience. The previous ships, we lost them, all of them. We don't have any of them now.

RDML DRISCOLL: Sir, in the back.

REP9: As-Salamu 'Alaykum. (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: There are informations saying that the Iraqi Navy and the U.S. Navy detained some of drug smugglers on Iranian boats, and some of them were on Qatar boats. Do you have some statistics about the nationality of the boats, the number of the incidents?

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: I don't think we have such a thing, such a smuggling thing. We catch some people, trespassing people, but ... but ... we have such incidents continuously. We detain them, we capture them as we have ... but we ... As I have mentioned earlier, we return them back to their countries. We have agreements with the neighboring countries, but at precise statistics about the number of trespassing, we don't have that.

RDML DRISCOLL: Sir.

REP10: Thanks. Jonathan Blakely from NPR. Two questions: As you know, the Georgians are pulling their personnel out of Iraq to deal with their own problems. Are they in any way involved with the naval operations logistically or anything like that? And can you speak broadly about the Georgians leaving Iraq?

And the second question: Is there any information on—any new information—on the detained journalist, Ali Omar Amashadani?
Thank you.

RDML DRISCOLL: First question on the Georgians: The Georgians are redeploying the majority of their troops. We want to thank them for the effort that they have contributed positively to the Coalition here. They were ... Primarily, they were based down in the Wasit province, providing security, manning checkpoints, doing security searches and also providing some great medical support. So, we want to thank them for the great support they have given the coalition, and wish them well.

In terms of the detained journalist that you mentioned, we should have resolution within a few days about the security file for him and then we'll be able to make an announcement.

REP11: (Inaudible) they weren't, the Georgians weren't working with the naval operation (inaudible)?

RDML DRISCOLL: Not to my knowledge.

REP11: Okay.

RDML DRISCOLL: Yeah. Sir.

REP12: As Salamu 'Alaykum, (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Admiral Jawad, have you caught some gun smuggling through Charge of the Knights, through the ... the neighboring countries? Have you ... caught some weapons?

Admiral Driscoll, after the fifth year for the existence of the Coalition troops in Iraq, what is the statistics about the U.S. killed elements during the last period? The attacks against the troops are reappearing again, so thank you.

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: I would speak about Khor Abdullah. We have not noticed or catch any weapons smuggling in Khor Abdullah area. And the smuggling operations that have been caught are not of that big amount. It was some of gas ... gasoline smuggling, sheep smuggling, but no weapons, no drugs have been smuggled through Khor Abdullah.

RDML DRISCOLL: Thank you. In terms of security and the trends we're seeing, we continue to see an improvement in the security environment. Since the middle of 2004, we've seen a decline in the number of violent incidents, and that continues. Violent incidents in July continue to decline as compared to earlier months in the year. There have been ... al Qaida and other terrorists continue to try to do spectacular attacks that just bring indiscriminate violence to the Iraqi people, which ... this activity's been, you know, out-of-hand rejected by most Iraqis.

But we continue to see a positive trend in the security environment.
Shukran. Sir.

REP13: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Admiral Jawad. During ... Concerning the Navy Academy, have you re-established it, and what are your future plans for this academy?

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: The ... It is part of the Arab Gulf Academy for Navy Studies. It is ancient academy, was formed in 1975. The staff, with high-ranking officials, was graduated from there. I'm one of them. After the operations of 2003, we have joined Gulf Academy to Transportation Ministry. And during this year, we are rejoining it to Ministry of Defense. Now we are working on rebuilding the academy and all its branches, the college and the center, the institutions. We are keen on returning the academy, the Navy Academy to what ... the way it was before the war, as the Navy now is trying to develop the members of the Navy, the Naval Academy are wanted in all sectors. So, now we're working on it.

REP14: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Admiral Mohammed Jawad, you've said there is a big movement witnessed by Iraq. Where have you reached with building al Basrah port?

RADM JAWAD: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: The Basrah port, the big port some would call it, Iraqi big port. It is one of the strategic sites that's ... the Iraqi government is thinking to build. It should be on the sea; it should be to the south of Iraq. These studies, until now, did not reach a conclusion. We are hoping that the project would see the light soon enough.

RDML DRISCOLL: One more question?

REP15: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: My question is to General ... for General Patrick (sic). For the withdrawal of Georgian forces, as you know, there is a war in Georgia with Russia. Is that the main reason for the withdrawal, especially that they are leaving Diyala now? How the Coalition Forces are going to compensate for this withdrawal?

RDML DRISCOLL: The redeployment is requested by the Georgian government, and in the near term there will be some impact as we adjust operations. But once again, the support of the Georgians has been very significant and we applaud their efforts, and we wish them well.

Shukran. Thank you very much.

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